

## **Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Board Local Comprehensive Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Extension Plan**

### **(Section III)**

### **GENERAL NARRATIVE**

#### **A. WIA ORGANIZATION**

The Local Elected Officials in both counties have renewed their agreement to continuing as an Area. The Consortium Agreement between Howard and Carroll Counties designates Howard County as grant recipient and Howard County ~~Employment & Training~~ **Office of Workforce Development (E&T OWD)** as the administrative entity for the Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area. ~~E&T~~ **OWD** is a division of the Howard County Department of Administration. The contact person for the grant recipient and administrative entity is:

Francine Trout, **Acting** Director  
Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area  
The Columbia Workforce Center  
7161 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite D  
Columbia, MD 21046  
Telephone: 410-290-2620  
Fax: 410-290-2626  
E-mail: ftrout@howardcountymd.gov

#### **B. TITLE I OPERATIONAL AREAS**

1. Collaborative Local Labor Market Plan – (Our research has not produced up-to-date statistics for the labor market as identified in the current plan. Please see ARRA addendum for more current information) **The Mid-Maryland economy has been impacted by the recent recession as has the rest of the state. However, Mid-Maryland continues to enjoy a strong economy with consistently lower unemployment rates than some other areas and higher than average salaries.** Howard and Carroll counties attract both national and international companies in a variety of industries. As a result of the growth of these diverse companies, Mid-Maryland has a high concentration of employment within the industries targeted by GWIB. We range from number two through number seven in the state in these industries.<sup>1</sup> Mid-Maryland's geographic location has resulted in the continued expansion of the Area's economy. Growth drives the need in industry.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this section, Information obtained regarding Mid-Maryland's high growth and demand as provided by DLLR/Office of Labor Statistics and GWIB's Industry Cluster –Based Initiatives.

## GWIB INDUSTRY CLUSTER RANKING IN MID-MARYLAND

CLUSTER	RANKING IN STATE	% Of Statewide Employment
Bioscience	2	14.5
Aerospace	4	11.4
Information Technology	3	11.2
Construction	4	11.0
Retail	5	9.30
Transportation	5	9.20
Business Services	6	8.40
Manufacturing	7	7.80
Hospitality and Tourism	6	7.80
Education	5	7.10
Finance & Insurance	6	6.40

Howard County has over 8,100 employers with approximately 155,475 in the labor force; Carroll County's employer base is over 4,948 and over 95,100 in the labor force. According to the 3<sup>rd</sup> qtr 2008 LMI report on Industry decline and growth patterns, Currently Mid-Maryland's areas of significant growth are include: professional and technical, education services, management of companies and enterprises, administrative and support services, food service and drinking establishment services. high-tech and life sciences, manufacturing, transportation, and business services. We anticipate additional growth based on current BRAC statistics. Over half of Mid-Maryland's workforce commutes outside of the area. Significant numbers of commuters from across the state of Maryland as well as out-of-state workers come into Carroll and Howard counties for employment. Education is highly valued in the Area. The 2008 Maryland Report Card indicates that both counties have a high school graduation rate of approximately 94%. In addition, the report indicates that over 80% of Howard's graduates go on to pursue post secondary studies and Carroll County Officials indicate over 83% go on to post secondary studies. 94% with 83% going onto post-secondary education (2008 Maryland Report Card). Howard's graduation rate is 94% with a little over 70% of those graduating going on to post-secondary education (2006 Maryland Report Card).

Currently, our current highest number of openings are in: Administrative Support (1267), Public Administration (400) and Retail (360). The Homeland Security industry growth and demand continues, especially with our proximity to Ft. Meade/NSA. The requirements for employment in homeland security are being met through networking among the principles, job fairs and the communities increasing information and access to information regarding potential jobs and skills required. Meeting the requirement for security clearances is a major challenge and anyone holding one or more clearances is rarely known to the workforce centers. NSA in Anne Arundel County pulls from the

Howard County labor market to meet the demand for engineers, as many of the veteran engineers are retiring. Subsequently Mid-Maryland, particularly Howard County has seen moderate growth in the Aerospace Industry, which contributes to over 11% of the employment base, according to available information related to GWIB industry clusters.

Comparatively, Mid-Maryland's Health Care Industry comprises a lesser percentage of the industry base. However, both counties have seen a strong demand for an increased number of skilled entry-level healthcare workers. As well, there continues to be a demand for professional-level healthcare workers. Mid-Maryland has seen an **increase in demand in** the ~~experiences moderate demand in~~ the Hospitality/Tourism Industry, although the hospitality industry is slightly larger. That being said, the turnover rates are always higher than desired, precipitated by lower wages, while employers continue to look for work ethics, consistency and productivity in workers. A significant number of the total youth population (both counties) works in the hospitality and retail industries. In Carroll County, the greatest industry gain has been in **Professional and Technical services**, in ~~Construction and is projected to continue in growth.~~ **Other industries of growth include:** ~~This growth has increased the demand for~~ **specialty trade contractors** including carpenters, electricians, construction laborers and HVAC technicians and installers. ~~Both counties had experienced high demand in the retail industry.~~ **Howard County has seen a number of retail businesses close in the past year.** Retail business in Carroll County had a tremendous spurt in growth. **The need for retail workers in Mid-Maryland will continue to be in demand but may not be at the level it was prior to the current recesses ion.** ~~The Warehouse/Distribution industry experiences an ongoing need for workers.~~

Based on job seekers using the Mid-Maryland workforce centers, the IT industry decline has stabilized and the industry appears to be on the rise. **Much of this may be attributable to the growth in the defense industry in the region.** For the most part, employees losing jobs in both counties can find new employment with similar companies who need workers with similar skill sets.

**Beginning the 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr of 2008, Mid-Maryland began to see the direct impact on local businesses as layoffs became inevitable. Figures from the 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr 2009 WARN Log indicated that the number of plant closures/mass layoff had already far surpassed 2008 figures for the entire year. While Mid-Maryland has enjoyed relatively low levels of unemployment in comparison to the rest of the state, the unemployment rate had begun to steadily rise by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr of 2008. Mid-Maryland's unemployment rate is currently 5.6%, up sharply from 3.4% just one year ago.**

In both counties, housing studies identified workforce-housing issues. A shortage of affordable housing affects the supply side of workers available for entry-level, lower skilled positions. The counties are working to find suitable solutions.

Additionally, the lack of public transportation contributes to the challenges some employers experience in finding and retaining employees.

Howard and Carroll counties both hold job fairs and recruitment fairs throughout the year to assist businesses with hiring needs and to help job seekers obtain employment. Mid-Maryland will continue to offer these job fairs and specialized recruitments for industries in high growth and high demand areas. As a sign of the current economy, over 2000 job seekers attended a government, contractor, and BRAC job fair in May 2009.

The One-Stops focus on identifying transferable skills of job seekers and help them transition quickly into similar jobs. Based on business and job seeker customer need, the Centers will tailor services offered. Mid-Maryland will continue to provide assessments and tools to enhance opportunities available to employers and job seekers.

To meet the demands of the local labor market, the business staff works collaboratively with local economic development in addressing the workforce needs of new and expanding companies. One of the most successful strategies used is the regional recruitment effort, targeting workers in specific occupations that match the skill-sets employers' need. Another strategy we plan on using is matching workers who have been identified through Rapid Response activities, or soon to become dislocated workers, and market them to companies who are hiring in the same skill sets. Wagner Peyser staff currently use an email distribution list to inform thousands of job seeker customers of current job opportunities and job acquisition strategies. New and expanding companies receive customized recruitment activities, customized job fairs, coordination and screening of applications, *regional* networking, and other "on-demand" human resource services. Training activities are directly related to local labor market demand. Another approach that may be used is customized training for high-growth, high demand industries. Apprenticeship programs are also a possibility. Title 1 staff will explore innovative ways to meet the demand of the local labor market and the needs of job seekers.

Mid-Maryland is a strong user of the Governor's training initiatives to meet the needs of small businesses, healthcare and other industries identified by the Local Workforce Investment Board. We expect to continue to extend training opportunities to local companies, as state initiative funding is available.

The consolidated Howard County Business Services Team works consistently and directly with the business community in addressing business needs. Mid-Maryland is expanding its marketing efforts to reach more employers and increase awareness of the business services available. The Mid-Maryland WIB has launched a new website [www.mid-marylandwib.org](http://www.mid-marylandwib.org) to enhance awareness of the Centers' services targeting both business and workforce needs.

Challenges in meeting labor force demands exist in industries and occupations that are high growth and high demand; Mid-Maryland is no exception. According to a Carroll County Commuter Survey prepared by the Jacob France Institute, Carroll has a highly educated and skilled workforce with most occupations held by workers in the following areas: management, business and financial operations, education, training and library, computer and mathematical occupations, healthcare, technical, architecture and engineering. Most of these positions are in businesses located in surrounding counties; however, national and international corporations have either their headquarters or their regional facility within the borders of Carroll. Major employers include Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, Random House, Joseph A. Banks, EVAPCO, English American Tailoring, Marada Industries and Carroll Hospital Center.

In Carroll County, the Business & Employment Resource Center (BERC) is an integral function that operates within the Department of Economic Development as the workforce development service provider. It is widely recognized that a sound economic development program consists of a strong workforce development component that responds to the needs of the businesses. For that reason, the strategies being developed for the economic development work plan for the upcoming year include the activities at BERC as a major theme. The three major focus areas in economic development in Carroll County consist of business attraction, business retention, and workforce development. Workforce development activities will be integral to both the attraction and retention efforts. As an example, aggressive business outreach to existing businesses as part of the retention activities will be performed in part by BERC staff. This will allow the department to respond to all of an employer's needs and provide direct service through the capabilities of the department, including workforce programs. Also, the Department of Economic Development maintains a web-based business retention program. A portion of the information collected is workforce related allowing business services staff to track employment trends, capture the demographics of the workforce, and identify workforce challenges. The retention program is a method of tracking businesses and enables instant referral to partnering service providers.

Weekly meetings between Economic Development staff and BERC create opportunities for collaboration and planning in helping local businesses locate and remain in Carroll County. Additionally, Carroll County BERC staff actively participates on the Chamber of Commerce Business and Education Committee, the Carroll County Career and Technology Council and chairs the Carroll County Workforce Development Partner group. This ensures regular communication among partner agencies, in particular the public school system and community college. BERC will continue to develop a more collaborative, business focused system to meet the needs of local businesses.

Howard **Office of Workforce Development** partners with the local Economic Development Authority (EDA) to provide services to new and existing businesses. Staff actively participates in EDA Business Appreciation Week activities. Involvement consists of visiting local businesses and determining how we can assist them with their workforce needs. Howard County workforce principals are participating with the Workforce Development Committee, Workforce Retention Committee and Job Fair Committee of the Chamber of Commerce. Members of the Columbia Workforce Center **participated** in the development of the Howard County Human Services Master Plan including areas of education, employment and senior services. We are also participating on the Workforce Development Committee of the local BRAC taskforce. Strategic planning between partners continues in order to meet the demand of local business.

BRAC's existence will impact the Maryland regional economy and workforce in numerous ways. It is anticipated that with BRAC and the Ft. Meade expansion thousands of jobs will be coming to the state of Maryland. Meeting the demands of these positions throughout Maryland must be a regional effort. Mid-Maryland expects to play a key role in working with the other Workforce Investment Areas to support the workforce developments needs of BRAC.

The Howard County BRAC/Ft. Meade Growth taskforce has identified Workforce Development as one of six major areas of focus with the expansion of Ft. Meade. In Mid-Maryland, the Mid-Maryland **Acting** WIA Director and Howard Community College's, Executive Director of Workforce Development, who is a Mid-Maryland WIB member, serve as co-chairs of a newly formed Workforce Development committee as part of the BRAC/Ft. Meade Growth Taskforce. There is at least one other WIB member who is on this committee. Some of the considerations of the committee are as follows:

- Assess the impact and requirements for BRAC workforce expansion at Ft. Meade and the community
- Strategies to assist with immediate and long-term employment needs for public and service employees
- Define aggressive workforce incentives for public and service employees
- Establish beneficial partnerships among area educational institutions and provide collaborative training and educational initiatives; expand capacity of Howard Community College to meet expected growth in training needs
- Work in partnership with state and local workforce investment agencies to meet workforce needs



Additionally, some of the other workforce needs will include recruitment, training and retraining of individuals. Training in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) areas is expected to increase, particularly science and technology, to match business and DOD needs. Mid-Maryland hopes to participate "in the realization of the WIRED vision to drive significant economic and workforce development transformation positioning the Sci Tech region as a major competitor statewide and nationally." Mid-Maryland will focus on local and regional partnerships to support BRAC. Howard and Carroll counties are currently working on a regional partnership with Anne Arundel, the City of Laurel and other surrounding counties. We will partner with the local community colleges as they develop new curriculum to meet the needs of BRAC. Economic Development is the lead agency in business recruitment; therefore we will continue to maintain our active partnership.

According to the Howard County Fort Meade Growth Management Information paper dated 28 February 2007, the emergence of BRAC and Ft. Meade growth it is projected to bring over 20,000 additional jobs during the next 5-7 years. 5695 new job positions are expected to be BRAC related. (Maryland BRAC Report 28 Dec. 2006). This does not include any NSA growth, which may add up to 4000 more positions. Nor do these numbers include DOD possibly adding another 2000 positions. This may bring the total number of jobs on Ft. Meade to 12,000. These 12,000 direct jobs on Ft. Meade do not include an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) agreement between a private company and the government, which could add another 10,000 private sector and government employees on Fort Meade property. Mid-Maryland is located one mile from Ft. Meade. It is expected that Howard County alone will gain 2259 new jobs and 1853 new households from this expansion at minimum. (These numbers do not include the expansion of other Maryland bases).

Training, including hard and soft skills, will need to be targeted to various populations. For example, it is imperative that local youth and adults understand the requirements of obtaining a security clearance and what can affect their possibility of obtaining a clearance. Many job seekers do not possess the necessary job search skills to successfully become employed in jobs or careers in this arena. Mid-Maryland's Workforce Centers plan to respond to these needs by providing workshops, assessments, one-on-one counseling, training, retraining or whatever else is required to ensure the success of the expansion. BRAC success will ultimately require a coordinated regional response. Mid-Maryland plans to build additional partnerships and use existing relationships throughout the state and region to support the BRAC initiative.

## 2. Local Area Governance (LWIB)

- a. Describe how the LWIB will coordinate the following title 1 activities/functions with local elected officials:

- (1) Title I staff, who act as representatives of the LEO(s) for this purpose, work directly with the LWIB members in establishing the policies or procedures, and in the development of the Plan. Board members have been solicited for, and have provided their input into the Plan. The board conducts over-sight of the one-stop system, as well as youth activities, the latter through the youth council. The board uses one-stop management and performance reports originated internally and by the state reporting system; local budget reports; labor market information originated by the state LMI unit in conjunction with training activities. The board input provides information that not only leads to changes in strategies of employment and training activities but also leads to higher community inclusiveness. (For example, the Board is planning to host two open houses, in conjunction with Title 1 staff and other center partners, for the community at the new Mid-Maryland Workforce Centers). Board members have also been involved at the local one-stops not only in observation of one-stop flow and function, but also in volunteering their time by presenting seminars or doing mock interviews with customers requesting that particular service.

Mid-Maryland's Board supports the connection of prospective employees to employers through the "Exchange", and supports the training requirements and opportunities for workforce improvement and incumbent workers. The flagship of Mid-Maryland workforce investment board is "One Stop" service delivery. One-Stop services streamline and consolidate services through better collaboration of service partners; empower individuals by providing them training and employment choices; and provide universal access to all customers.

- (2) Selecting one-stop operators with the agreement of the chief elected official: The One-Stop Operator was selected by agreement between the LWIB and a consortium of three or more partner organizations with the consent of the LEO(s) or their representatives.
- (3) The youth council recommends potential providers of youth services, **when applicable** or activities to the LWIB. Title I staff use the respective jurisdictions' procurement policies and procedures for inclusion of the recommended providers in a competitive process, as necessary.



Eligible training providers of adult and dislocated worker intensive and training services may be recommended by the LWIB for processing under the established procedures for inclusion on the local training provider list.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission training provider list is also used as a source for training. Title I staff use the local procurement system in each county to incorporate the LWIB's recommendations.

#### (4) Developing a WIB Budget

The Mid-Maryland LWIB does not have its own operating budget. Day-to-day operational duties are performed by the Title I staff under the board's oversight, and in conjunction with the respective county oversight or supervision. Title I staff also provide administrative support to the board. The budgets, which support staff functions and activity, are developed within the respective Title I County structure and are controlled by the local government system.

Negotiating and reaching agreement on local performance measures:

Mid-MD LWIB, with concurrence of the LEO's, adopted the State and Governor's negotiated benchmarks as the local performance expectations. The Mid-Maryland LWIB supports the adoption of Common Measures and is excited that Maryland obtained a waiver for early implementation.

(6) Mid-Maryland supports the Statewide Employment Statistic System under the Wagner-Peyser Act. With the inception of Common Measures, the WP and WIA staff have been working together to help achieve performance outcomes for both funding streams. We have had joint trainings and staff meetings to determine how to best achieve these goals and plan to continue to do so throughout the next several years.

(7) Coordinating Workforce Investment activities with Economic Development strategies and developing employer linkages:

Mid-MD Title I entities participate with local economic development authorities in marketing and recruitment initiatives for prospective or expanding companies; making one-stop resource information and space available to employers for job matching, providing job fairs, including customized job fairs, and other employer activities; in coordination with local partners, or Cobs; or in the use of economic development training grants; in conjunction with local government transportation departments and economic development activities; and in coordinating with the community colleges' business and

industry initiatives. The Business Services Teams work in conjunction with the coordinated workforce efforts of the Regional DBED Business Development Specialist.

The Business and Employment Resource Center, in conjunction with the Carroll County Department of Economic Development, offers customized training monies for companies locating to Carroll County as well as assistance in securing PWQ funds from the state. Carroll County has made economic development a top priority by offering grants, administered through BEREC, to assist with employee training to expanding companies. To help meet local demands, Carroll County will continue to partner with the Career and Technology Center to increase business partnerships for student internships and employment.

### 3. Local Board Staffing

The Mid-Maryland WIB relies on the Title I county government employees for its staff support needs. None of the Title I employees is a hired employee of the LWIB. Each respective county hires employees for workforce functions according to respective policies and procedures, and according to funding availability within each county.

### 4. Youth Council

#### a. Coordinating Youth Activities in a local area:

The role of the youth council is to make recommendations to the LWIB, the One-Stop Operators, or the Administrative entity on programming, operational issues, and on issues of community-wide youth service coordination. We are working to revitalize youth council and further engage them in the enhancement of youth services.

#### b. Development of Local Plan

Mid-Maryland WIB is in the process of strengthening and rebuilding its Youth Council. The Council contributed to the review and development of the youth portion of the comprehensive plan taking into consideration the supply resources for youth and employer demand. The Youth Council promotes the development of a system that prepares youth for current and future employment. Strategies to be used are: 1) System Development to train youth in skill sets to meet employer needs; 2) Resource mapping to identify provider funding and supportive services; 3) Recruitment & Marketing to identify employer needs, promote systems and services, and to develop a youth advisory group. Training services needed to target the

development of work maturity skills including communication and problem solving skills.

c. Recommending eligible youth service providers:

In accordance with the Workforce Investment Act, Section 123 and the County procurement procedures services for youth enter a formal bidding process. Youth council members review the proposals from youth service providers and make recommendations to the LWIB for approval. Organization and financial viability of vendors is verified through the respective county purchasing offices and/or the established pre-award system, the formal bidding process.

d. Conducting oversight, monitoring and corrective action of the local area's youth plan:

Title I staff monitor youth service providers and will report findings to the Youth Council. The Youth Council can recommend to the WIB any corrective action including contract termination, as warranted.

5. One-Stop System for Service Delivery

a. Comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Mid-MD:

Columbia Workforce Center

7161 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite D

Columbia, MD 21046

410-290-2600 ph.

410-290-2626 fax

Operator: Howard County Employment & Training **Office of Workforce Development**

Carroll County Business & Employment Resource Center

224 N. Center St.

Westminster, MD 21157-5134

Phone: 410-386-2820 Fax: 410-876-2977

Operator: BERC

Satellite centers in Mid-MD:

Howard Community College

10650 Hickory Ridge Road

Columbia, MD 21044

Telephone: 410-772-4979

Fax: 410-772-4986

Carroll Community College  
1601 Washington Road  
Westminster, MD 21157  
Telephone: 410-386-8107  
Fax: 410-876-5869

~~Plans for co-location of the Westminster Wagner Peyser staff and services with the Carroll Co. Business & Employment Resource Center are currently under development and planned to be completed April 20, 2007.~~

b. Service Delivery

Orientations to One-Stop system services are offered on a regular basis to customers seeking employment and/or training information. They are offered using a workshop format and/or on an individual basis, as customer need dictates. These workshops are facilitated by WIA or Wagner Peyser staff. The orientation process provides access to system-wide resources inclusive of partner and community services. Youth have access to all one-stop services and resources. The Maryland Workforce Exchange System, use of the EmployOn job search on-line system, and other on-line job-search sites has fast-forwarded customer services. Comprehensive services to business are provided through business service consultants, business resource representatives and business teams. Collaboration exists among the partners for the enhancement of workforce services, such as, planning, and program development, and delivery.

WIA, Wagner Peyser (including POAC), DORS and UI are all co-located full-time at the new Columbia Workforce Center. There is also part-time representation from the Office on Aging and Howard Community College. The Title 1 Youth Counselor has offices located at both the CWC and HCC.

~~In Carroll County full co-location is expected to occur April 20, 2007 of WIA, WP Wagner Peyser, DORS, UI Unemployment Insurance Appeals, Carroll Community College and the Adult Literacy Education Programs staff at the current are full time at BERC office fulltime and DORS offers services at BERC part-time.~~

In an effort to provide the most-customer friendly service possible, job seekers are encouraged to use the MWE system from any location where there is Internet access, including their homes. If individuals do not have Internet access at home and cannot get to a physical One-Stop Center they are told of other places where there is free public Internet access in the community. The Mid-Maryland area also has many service

organizations. Referrals are made to other partners and community organizations that may provide assistance to our customers.

### Required Partners

- (1) Wagner-Peyser Act Programs are provided in the WIA. Services for job seekers include core services on a universal access basis. Joint participation of state staff and Title I staff in Early Intervention workshops, as well as any other core services, promotes an awareness of the comprehensive services and facilitates customer referrals. ~~In support of the State's vision for consolidation the co-location of the Westminster Workforce Center staff and services with Carroll county BERC are anticipated to be completed April 20, 2007.~~

Service delivery in Mid-Maryland is operationally consolidated using a team approach, primarily consisting of staff members from both WIA funded and state funded staff programs. All core service functions have been integrated and cross training has been completed in compliance with the law and state personnel regulations. Features of the integrated system include an orientation process highlighting all partner services; a common resource area; common job search or job related workshops; technology linkage; sharing of information, resources, and staff; joint case management and funding; combined staff meetings, integrated program planning and trouble-shooting; consolidated business team functions, and a unified commitment to the Maryland Workforce Exchange.

Mid-Maryland's Business Service teams work to provide a comprehensive "demand-side" service approach to the business community. The core team consists of state, WIA, and Veteran's program staff. We are in the process of adding other partner's in the Center to the team including representation from DORS and POAC. Depending on the type of service, a representative of the local community college, Rapid Response, DSS or the Disability Navigator may also participate. Members of the team attend EDA monthly meetings. The team addresses employer needs, marketing to high growth/high demand industries, and meets to establish goals, plan outreach and recruitment efforts as well as any other item on the business service menu.

Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker service programs and Veterans' Programs are further detailed in section "5c".

Maryland's Veterans' Program provides veterans' activities authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38, United States code. Veterans receive preference in all services as outlined by the law. See Section 6a. (5).

The LVER assumes functional supervisory responsibility for the Veterans' Program as well as community outreach. The DVOP provides career-coaching and case management services to veterans with barriers to employment. Additional services include outreach, individual employment plans and collaboration with and referral to other partner agencies for additional services as needed.

- (2) The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with severe disabilities that may limit activities of daily living and opportunities for employment. The basic menu of services includes assessments for determining eligibility, priority of service, and vocational rehabilitation needs; vocational counseling and guidance, referral and other necessary services.

DORS also provides vocational and other training services, including personal and vocational adjustment training, and accommodations. Also provided are interpreter services, reader services, rehabilitation teaching services and orientation and mobility services for individuals who are blind. Job search and placement assistance, job retention services, supported employment and post employment services are available to assist with regaining, maintaining or advancing in employment. As part of the community partnership, DORS is aware of and utilizes other partner services necessary to assure that job seekers with disabilities secure needed services.

Partnerships exist between DORS and WIA staff for joint case management, and funding for occupational training. DORS personnel are co-located part-time two full-time at the various comprehensive centers to facilitate ease of access and more spontaneous involvement in integrated services. BERC will continue to partner with DORS to provide a joint summer youth program, as funding allows.



- (3) Family and Children Services of Central Maryland has the Experience Works contract which services older workers. We are currently electronically linked to them. The comprehensive one-stops and other public entities are used as work sites. There are currently three individuals participating in work experience through Experience Works at the Columbia Workforce Center. Cross-referrals are made to relevant partner agencies, including Title I, to obtain services, and to assist in meeting the needs of this target population.
- (4) Carroll and Howard Community Colleges administer post-secondary vocational education in Mid-Maryland using a variety of strategies applicable to the funding streams. Occupational training programs leading to immediate employment and fostering greater links between the colleges and the business community are used in the Area. Examples of job specific courses are: training first responders and public safety officers; nursing and allied health; office technology; trade occupations. HCC targets its Carl Perkins allocation to provide tutoring, disability support, and career counseling and other programs aimed at low-income students. Carroll Community College has also entered into an agreement with BERC to provide credentialed computer classes at the BERC One-Stop. Both community colleges continue to be primary resources for contracted Title I Intensive Services and will continue to be instrumental in the provision of Title I Training Services and services to DORS, DSS customers, and public school students with disabilities.
- (5) The provision of Trade Act services is a collaborative effort between the state DWD and local state and Title I staff. Training services are made available to Trade Act eligible customers according to the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002.
- (6) Residents in the Mid-Maryland area access unemployment compensation by phoning the call-in centers. Residents are also given the option to file a claim via Internet. Profiled individuals are required to attend Early Intervention workshops, facilitating referral to other one-stop services early in the individual's unemployment insurance claim. Comprehensive workforce services will be provided to individuals as they establish an unemployment claim, and as implemented by the state UI officials. As long as the UI rate does not exceed 4%, Mid-Maryland anticipates serving all profiled UI recipients in

conjunction with the state's vision for linking claimants to comprehensive one-stop services.

- (7) HUD programming provides limited employment and job readiness services to a specific target group through linkages within the local community, generally through the Community Services Block Grant Act.
- (8) The Carroll County Public Schools, Carroll Adult Learning Connections (CALC) Community College Adult Education program and Howard Community College provide adult basic education and literacy training. Title I customers are referred to ABE and Literacy Works programs, GED and External Diploma programs, based on the customers' needs. Carroll Community College is co-located in the BERC building, facilitating ease of access and resource sharing.
- (9) Job Corps uses the Columbia Workforce Center's for educational purposes on a regular basis. Job Corps participates in the youth council and on the WIB. Occasionally, the opportunity occurs for certain WIA youth to be co-enrolled in Job Corps.

#### Optional Partners

- (1) The Department of Social Services has been included as an optional partner due to the continued involvement with and provision of funding to local employment and training programs.

~~Under contracts administered and funded through Department of Social Services, BERC administers the Independence Through Employment program providing job readiness and employment assistance to Temporary Cash Assistance applicants and recipients. BERC also administers the Food Stamp Employment and Training program and the Able Bodied Working Adults program to Carroll County food stamp recipients.~~

The Howard County Office of Workforce Development (OWD) received a grant from DLLR. Through partnership with the Howard County Department of Social Services (DSS) the HCOWD will deliver work-based training activities, job placement and retention services designed to assist Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) customers, Non-Custodial Parents (NPEP), and Foster Care Independent Living young adults in identifying and obtaining full-time unsubsidized

employment opportunities that lead to permanent economic self-sufficiency. These services will simultaneously help these participating customers meet federal work participation requirements while improving the lives of current and future family members.

Up to 70% of participating referrals will be placed in WEX and/or placed in unsubsidized employment.

~~DSS, although not co-located at the Columbia One-Stop, participates in the services of the workforce center and also contributes in providing services to businesses pulling upon their own resources.~~

Title 1 representatives are available for resume and interview preparation for inmates preparing to re-enter the workforce after incarceration. We provide One-Stop contact information and encourage them to use the One-Stops for services. Staff has provided job search workshops and information at the Howard County Detention Center, Women's Correctional Institute and Laundry Facility in Sykesville. ~~A member of the staff currently holds an OWDS certification and is providing Train-the-Trainer services for other members of the Maryland Workforce Community.~~

### Other System Components

The Disability Navigator program plays a critical role in promoting workforce services to the disability community by engaging the business community, and coordinating service provision among appropriate community service entities. For example, the DORS representative and the D/N work jointly on service strategies from initial contact through case management, employment, and follow-up. Education and disability awareness are also key roles of the Disability Navigator.

### BRAC

This past year was a very busy one for BRAC related workforce events. One of the major accomplishments was the hiring of a staff person to disseminate information specifically to DISA employees and their families. The staff person was oriented to all of the relevant services in surrounding counties. This coincided with the development of three kiosks so each of their three main building lobbies have 24 hour access to

information about moving to the Ft. Meade area. The kiosks are staffed during working hours and two of them have racks of printed information for local areas.

Through our involvement with the Baltimore Washington Chamber of Commerce our staff were instrumental in managing conferences on BRAC related transportation, workforce, education and government contracting. A DISA career fair was supported by this office in November and another is being planned for June. At the June event guests will be interviewed on the spot and over 50 different DISA departments will be represented.

Part of our mission is to inform the community and we are doing that by holding BRACJobs101 presentations in both Howard and Anne Arundel Counties. Over 250 job seekers attended the first session in Howard County and double that number are expected in Anne Arundel. Speakers from DISA, NSA, and 5 prime contractors presented information about what jobs they had available and how to apply. There was also a presentation on how to get security clearances.

Work continues on developing business initiatives and working with the local communities to support efforts to gear the public schools curriculums to match future employment needs. We intend to coordinate efforts of the summer youth programs with BRAC so as many youths as possible can be prepared to enter the BRAC workforce.

### Customer Needs

The Mid-Maryland Comprehensive Workforce System provides universal access to all core, intensive, and training services as needed to: Dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals such as migrant and seasonal farm workers; public assistance recipients, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, (including older individuals, people with limited English - speaking abilities, and job seekers with disabilities).

For example, services provided by each of the System and community partners are coordinated and offered through the workforce center system, including but not limited to:

- FIRN (Foreign Born Information Referral Network), Carroll and Howard Community Colleges ESOL classes. Interpreters are also provided. Written materials are translated into Spanish.

- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers programming includes labor exchange, ESOL, Command Spanish, and monitoring of housing fair practices.
- Besides DORS, job-seekers with disabilities receive comprehensive services through a myriad of community partners. Additionally, the Disability Navigator plays a key role in coordination of service provisions, cross referrals and joint case management. Maryland Access Point (MAP), in Howard County, offers a total comprehensive package of services to job seekers with disabilities and the aging population.
- Department of Social Services is the primary provider of services or provider of funding for services to public assistance recipients. The Community Services Council and Community Action Council also play a role in service provisions.
- Rapid Response teams are in place to provide services to dislocated workers in conjunction with the State Dislocated Worker Unit.
- The Workforce Centers reach out to all individuals with multiple barriers to employment through service provisions. Additionally, job readiness services are provided at the Carroll County Detention Center and at the Detention Center of the MD State Correctional Facility in Jessup (through an MSDE grant to AACC).
- For the “aging-population”, the service focus will be based on the federal protocols for serving Older Workers. Additionally, coordinated partnerships with the state and local Offices on Aging are used in conjunction with the one-stop workforce center services. Experience Works is still available in both jurisdictions.

A basic premise of serving the jobseeker customer is through practicing the principles of customer choice and providing the information necessary to make wise choices not only for themselves but also for their future employer. This includes the use of current and cutting-edge information covering workforce and labor market, job search, training options, retention strategies, and understanding the individual’s role within the economy.

An individual seeking employment chooses an approach that works best for his/her situation. If possible, people who are in danger of losing their jobs through no fault of their own, get job search tools before their final day of employment. This frequently occurs during the coordination and provision of Rapid Response services. Many of the “dislocated workers” are targeted for E/I workshops, where the individual gets

another head start into becoming employed. If the dislocated worker accesses workforce services through participation in the orientation overview session, the opportunities and supports abound for the exploration to the acquisition and retention of the next job.

Core services at the Centers are offered universally. Regardless of the “target title” of the job seeker, and throughout the progression of built-in services within the Centers, (orientation overview, tools of the resource area, workshops, core, intensive, and possibly training services), the individual must demonstrate their desire to enter the workforce by using the resource tools, following the suggestions, taking the initiative, with supportive assistance as needed in order to see outcomes of employment.

Some of the community resources used are: Pinnacle Resources, a non-profit organization working with displaced homemakers, low-income individuals and foreign born persons; DSS services are used in conjunction with public assistance recipients or those who could use DSS services; Community Action Council services are used for those people not eligible for DSS services.

For job seekers with disabilities the services of the Disability Navigator are used in conjunction with organizations such as: DORS, the Dept. of Mental Health, Howard County’s MAP (Maryland Access Point) program and many other community resources offering a total comprehensive package of services to job seekers with disabilities and to their families or caretakers.

Approximately 13-16% of Howard County’s population is foreign-born according to the American Community survey of 2005. The Columbia Workforce Center coordinates services as appropriate through FIRN (Foreign Born Information Referral Network) as well as making direct referrals with appropriate follow-up. Subsequently it is not all that unusual to have job seekers whose primary language is not English. HCC provides on-going classes in ESOL. We have some basic forms in Spanish posted at the CWC. Carroll Community College at the Business & Employment Resource Center facilitates ESOL classes for people with limited English-speaking ability.

Migrant Seasonal programs are operated in both Howard and Carroll Counties. Merlin Williams (Hagerstown) maintains and performs Maryland MSFW Population Estimate for Mid-Maryland. Christmas Tree Farm wage surveys are performed in Carroll County by the Division of Workforce Development staff. Job orders are entered in the Maryland



Workforce Exchange for farm workers in both counties within 24 hours of receipt.

State veterans' program staff, funded through Veterans' Programs provides veterans' services activities authorized under Chapter 41 of Title 38, United States code. Veterans receive priority of service as authorized by the "Jobs for Veterans' Act" in all Center services and in keeping with the specific program eligibility requirements. Special services available include outreach, individual employment plans, career coaching, and case management. Referral to other partner agencies for additional services are made as needed.

#### Community Based Involvement

Howard County's community based organizations are a part of the local workforce system. Each plays a vital role in the process of preparing people for work and inter-agency referrals: Pinnacle Resources, serving low-income and people re-entering the workforce, through a Community Service Block Grant; Humanim serving specific populations within the disability community; FIRN (Foreign Born Referral Network) linking the foreign born with appropriate workforce services; GrassRoots provides a place to live for the homeless who may be job seekers. Celebration Church, where the WIA staff has provided resources and referrals, and Christ Church Link operate job search programs and youth job readiness programs. Both organizations expand service resources for youth with barriers.

The Business and Employment Resource Center utilizes the resources of the Westminster Rescue Mission, the Northeast Social Action Program, Inc., and New Life for Girls for support services, including, but not limited to substance abuse counseling, rent, energy, housing, clothing, and food assistance. Individuals are referred from these agencies to BERC for job search assistance and training.

#### e. Memoranda of Understanding

Copies of the Memoranda of Understanding between the Mid-Maryland WIB and One-Stop partners are located in Attachment V.

### 6. Services

#### a. Adults and Dislocated Workers

- (1) Services provided to adults and dislocated workers in Mid-MD. Services are available according to the customers'

needs and desires, but essentially focus on the core, intensive, and training models per the WIA design. Core services are available on a universal access basis and are typically delivered at the comprehensive workforce centers. Rapid Response services are typically delivered at the employer's site. Some customers prefer using the resource center independently while others prefer assistance on an as needed basis. Customers use MWE for self-directed services but also access staff-assisted core, as needed.

Each center's core services include: outreach, orientation overview of centers resources (Power Point presentation includes all system partner services); initial triage assessment; access to job search resources and tools at the centers, such as internet based resources (MWE, EmployOn, and other job search websites); linkages to community partners; access to local, regional, and national labor market information.

Provision of Intensive Services including Title I eligibility determination and registration; case management and counseling, (includes one-on-one consultation in order to assess and address any job search barriers); pre-vocational skill development; career development; basic education and remediation (literacy); development of workable strategies, interventions; short-term courses or classes to enhance marketability to high growth, high demand industries in the local labor market; job search assistance applicable to the service tier, and follow-up.

Provision of Training Services, including job readiness, on-the-job training, occupational skills in high growth and high demand employment areas; adult education and literacy and job match/placement activities. MWE definitions for intensive and training service levels are used as a guiding tool.

Youth are fully integrated into the One-Stop system and may access any of the services applicable, as outlined in their service plan.

## (2) Supportive Service Policy

The Mid-Maryland Area offers coordinated supportive services, as funding allows, for adults and dislocated workers. Supportive services enable an individual to participate in WIA

Title I core, intensive and training activities, and include but are not limited to transportation, child-care, dependent care, housing, and needs-based payments, and are calculated on an individual, as-needed basis. To be eligible for supportive services payments, an adult or dislocated worker customer must be receiving **core**, intensive, or training services, and unable to obtain supportive services through other programs.

### (3) Needs-Related Payment Policy

Mid-Maryland offers Needs-Related Payments only as funding allows. Payments may be provided to adults and dislocated workers who have exhausted their UI benefits or who did not qualify for UI, or compensation under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002, to enable participation in WIA programs.

Eligible adults and dislocated workers must have been enrolled in training (defined as beginning training within 30 days) by the end of the 13th week after the most recent lay-off that caused the dislocated worker to become eligible for employment and training activities; or, if later, by the end of the 8th week after an employee is informed that a short-term layoff will in fact exceed six (6) months. In Mid-Maryland, the level of needs-related payments has been set at \$150/week, not to exceed the applicable level of unemployment compensation or the USDOL LLSIL.

### (4) ITA Policy

Customers may be eligible for training services after prior attempts to secure employment have been unsuccessful or it has been documented that the training service will lead directly to employment. Initially customers must access Core and Intensive Services. After assessment and consultation with a counselor, and substantiation of labor market information and labor demand, customers must provide justification with merit for an ITA account. The training emphasis will be in response to local labor market needs, specifically in the high growth or high demand occupations. Participants have the right to select the training provider from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) approved list.

ITA limits on duration and value are established based on the following factors: training funds must be obligated within the current program year; typically training is not extended beyond a 6 month period in Columbia, but funds can be obligated for longer periods of time at BERC depending on the training requirements; training is based on individual needs and circumstances and funding availability. Value amounts are based on funding availability and customer needs in relation to labor market demand; adjustments are made after submission of quarterly reports; ceiling values are based on current obligations, expenditures, accruals, and balances. There is an on-going assessment in terms of balance of funds and anticipated numbers to be served. Leveraging of funds with partner agencies is routinely used. POS Section 6a (5) applies. Policy statement is attached. (Attachment I)

ITAs may be issued for out of school youth based on requirements set forth in WIFI 19-04, ~~if extended to PY07 and PY08 and based on availability of funds.~~

In Howard County, customers are required to sign-off that they have been notified of the requirement to apply for Pell Grants or other awards, as applicable. In Carroll County there is an item on a training approval checklist that must be checked indicating the customer has applied for Pell. The fiscal manager will not approve the training if that has not been done.

Mid-Maryland has not engaged in OJT, customized training, or other training that falls outside of the parameters for the ITA accounts as specified in WIFI 10-99 Change I, and 11-99 thus there is no policy or procedures in place for this activity.

#### (5) Priority of Service Policy

Mid-Maryland has adopted a Priority of Service policy that is two-fold to address both the veterans' priority provisions of the Jobs for Veterans' Act and the policy that is triggered by fiscal benchmarks.

- a. Veterans and spouses are entitled to priority of service under any qualified job training program if the person otherwise meets the program eligibility requirements. The

Jobs for Veterans' Act policy is constant and has the following priority levels:

1. First, to veterans who are on welfare or are low income (LLSIL).
2. Spouses of veterans as detailed below under the Jobs for Veterans Act.
3. Welfare recipients or other low-income people, as established by the LLSIL.
4. Veterans not receiving public assistance or who are low- income.

Eligible spouses as referred to in #2 above are spouses of any of the following:

- A veteran who died of a service-connected disability.
  - A veteran who has a total service connected disability.
  - Any veteran who died while undergoing evaluation for a disability.
  - An active duty Armed Forces member who for a total of more than 90 days has been MIA (missing in action) or a POW (prisoner of war).
- b. Application of the triggered priority of service is determined by obligations and expenditures, with quarterly benchmarks at 25%, 50%, and 75%. If the obligations/expenditures are exceeded and there are insufficient funds, the following categories of participants will be provided services according to the priority levels.

**First Priority Level:**

- First, to veterans who are on welfare or are low-income (LLSIL).
- Spouses of veterans as detailed above under the Jobs for Veterans Act.
- Welfare recipients or other low-income people, as established by the LLSIL.
- Veterans not receiving public assistance or who are low- income.

**Second Priority Level:**

An individual with one or more of the following barriers:

- Basic skill deficiency or lacking HS diploma
- Individual with a disability
- Ex-offender
- Obsolete skills relative to current labor market needs
- Older worker
- Multiple job losses within a year
- English as a second language
- Homeless

(6) “Self-Sufficiency” and “Inability to retain employment”

In Mid-Maryland, employed adults earning less than 150% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level, in relation to family size, may qualify for intensive services or training services. Levels are defined by the current USDOL Lower Living Standard Income Levels for the State of Maryland

Employed dislocated workers may qualify for intensive or retraining services as needed to retain employment leading to self-sufficiency or if their current wage is less than 80% of their wage at dislocation. The training request must be reasonable in relation to the current use of training dollars, and local labor market conditions (high growth/high demand) and what appears to be a prudent use of taxpayer dollars.

Mid-Maryland’s definition of “inability to retain employment” is defined as the loss of two or more jobs during the twelve months preceding the eligibility determination.

(7) Rapid Response Contact

For Carroll County, the staff contact person who will work with the State Dislocated Worker Unit to plan and provide Rapid Response services, is Denise Rickell, of the Business and Employment Resource Center. ~~Tammy Haines~~ Kathy Anderson is the designated alternate. The staff contact person at the Columbia Workforce Center is Cheryl Queen with Shelia Little as the designated alternate.

b. Youth

(1) Local Area Service Strategy



The strategic planning process for the youth of Mid-Maryland includes input from the Youth Council, **community** youth services providers, and Title I staff. The strategy involves identifying and addressing the gaps in youth services related to successfully completing an educational program and responding to the needs of employers requiring an enhancement of skills before entry into employment.

Strong community partnerships exist to supplement and enhance the core services provided to area youth. For example, youth service providers and staff participates in local parenting and teen pregnancy prevention efforts. DORS counselors, the Disability Navigator and other disability service providers are involved in the on-going partnering process to ensure continuity of services to youth with disabilities. Other community partnerships involve professional personnel through the public school system and youth treatment and counseling centers. The connections created through these partnerships aid in aligning youth with services to support a comprehensive delivery system. Continued monitoring of these services will occur to ensure that any identified gaps or deficiencies, therein, are addressed, and any duplication of services to youth is avoided.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) for out-**of-school** youth may be used to provide training for youth in high-growth, high-demand industries. **per WIF1 19-04. if extended to PY07 and PY08.** The appropriateness of using the waiver will be based on several factors, including availability of funds. One of the primary considerations in providing a youth with an ITA is that the youth first have a High School diploma or equivalent. If the youth has obtained a high school diploma or equivalent, whether through our program or not, and is interested in obtaining skills to become a more productive member of the workforce then an ITA may be an option. In considering using the ITA the following factors will be taken into consideration by the case manager before making a final determination:

- Youth are eligible to participate in training, as required by WIA

- An objective assessment has been completed including a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interest, aptitudes, supportive services and developmental needs
- An ISS is developed for the youth participant to plan how to achieve goals
- An age-appropriate career-goal is determined.
- The youth shows the case manager a commitment to complete the training

AND

- The youth commits to searching for training-related employment upon completion of the training.
- Youth are exposed to post-secondary educational opportunities at the community colleges. There is a very close relationship between the youth counselors and members of the community college staff. In Howard county, ABE/GED classes are held on the grounds of the community college which exposes the youth to post-secondary opportunities on a daily basis. The youth counselor also has office space at HCC. The youth counselor and youth can research various other educational opportunities using internet based resources. The youth counselor coordinates with other entities serving youth to connect with the business community.

- A Job Corp representative is at the CWC on a regular basis. The representative works with the youth counselor for referrals Job Corp is represented on the WIB and Youth Council. The youth counselors have made connections with other WIA youth counselors in the Region and are interested in participating on the best practices workgroups for youth.

The Mid-Maryland area provides availability of the 10 required youth elements in-house or in conjunction with community partners. In Howard County, HCC has been awarded, through competitive bid, a contract to provide certain required elements. The E&T Youth Coordinator works in conjunction with HCC to provide services. The Youth Coordinator and Title 1 staff in conjunction with partner and community organizations provides other services. BERC also has a youth coordinator on staff that provides many of the same services to youth. Below are examples from both Mid-Maryland offices as to how we intend to provide youth services:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies:
  - HCC, Carroll Community College's Adult Education Program and WIA BERC staff CALC pre-test students, using US DOL approved assessments, for reading, writing, and math. If a student does not have a high school diploma then he/she will enter class and work towards earning a GED. Student's strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing and math are assessed through achievements tests. Instruction begins at the student's individual level of ability, and a learning plan is written for each student. Progress is monitored throughout the course of the class. Instruction continues for each student until goals are attained. When appropriate, the Official GED Practice Test is given to evaluate progress toward a diploma.
2. Alternative secondary school offerings:
  - HCC offers Basic Skills/GED preparation classes for youth and adults. Many of our students are integrated into a 20+-hour per week public class, per our contract. From past experience, having both adult and youth students in this class has been motivating for the students. The adults are generally very motivated and bring many years of experience to the class. If the Youth are 18 years of age or older they may be eligible to participate in the External Diploma program as an option to the 20 hour per week class. If an eligible youth is working and cannot attend the class, they may be

placed in an evening class if that is more suitable to their schedule. See B2 under New Vision for Serving Youth.

3. Summer Employment Opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning

1. The past summer, for example, the BERC office partnered with their local DORS office to place youth eligible for both programs in summer employment and plan to continue supporting DORS with their Summer Youth program. Students will receive an orientation on basic work skills, learn interviewing skills and proper workplace behaviors. Jobs will be developed in the community and students will be matched with the jobs. All of this is contingent upon funding availability. This summer the LWIA intends to offer summer employment using AARA funds (see ARRA section)

4. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing

- The Youth Coordinator develops paid and unpaid work experiences for students. Many times the Youth Coordinator will go with the student to various worksites in an effort to develop work experiences for them. For example, one student was offered an administrative position with an organization after obtaining her GED through our program. The Youth Coordinator prepared her for her interview and accompanied her to her first several days of work. The YC then followed up with the employer to ensure the student was performing duties, as required and had the appropriate soft skills to work in an office environment. Another student was offered an opportunity with the local community college to assist ESOL students in class. This offer was made based on his performance in his GED class at the college. Youth job fairs are held in the Mid-Maryland area and youth are encouraged to attend these fairs to obtain employment. As part of the HCC training, youth attend the HCC job fair as part of their class. Prior to this fair, The teachers and Youth Coordinator prepare the youth on job search skills, resume creation and application completion and interviewing techniques.
- We also have a Career Exploration Day where in-school youth with disabilities shadow Howard County Government Employees for half of a day. The first year we had approximately 12 students and this past year increased to 23.

5. Occupational Skills Training

- As funding allows, once a youth has obtained a GED or if an eligible youth has a high school diploma upon entering the program,

occupational skills training is an option. The youth may be assessed for interest, aptitude or abilities. Once an occupation and its skills are identified then the appropriate training is researched. The youth may be required to do informational interviews, research LMI with the youth coordinator and identify appropriate training facilities. The youth will also be required to apply for financial aid when appropriate. In some cases a youth may have an opportunity for employment that requires a particular training. In these situations, the training will be provided with sufficient documentation from the employer for the training.

#### 6. Leadership development opportunities

- Students are offered regular meetings to develop their leadership skills. Field trips and guest speakers are part of this. Students receive instruction on job readiness skills, money management, entrepreneurship, and decision-making. Students also learn how sensitive topics should be addressed. This allows the students the opportunity to use and develop good judgment skills.

#### 7. Supportive Services

- The Mid-Maryland WIA provides supportive services for youth by linkages with community partners. The Youth Coordinators in the Area are knowledgeable about services available from other organizations and go above and beyond to provide support to participants. In both counties there are an abundance of organizations available to provide support such as the Health Department, Mental Health, DSS, Citizen Services, etc. As funding permits, we provide assistance with transportation costs for youth to attend training. Howard Community College is on a public bus route, as well. Many of the youth are associated with the local DSS offices that may provide childcare vouchers, food stamps, and/or medical assistance for our participants. When participants need items such as uniforms, protective eyewear or other required “tools” to complete their training, the Mid-Maryland areas supports those needs, as funding allows.

#### 8. Adult Mentoring

- Part of the job of the youth coordinators is to mentor the participants. Students receive mentoring on an individual basis. The agreement with HCC includes adult mentoring. Students receive an hour of mentoring each week on an individual basis. This allows the students to discuss any problems that he/she may be experiencing.

As the need arises, referrals are made to other community partners. The youth counselors act as mentors to the participants from intake through follow-up.

## 9. Follow-up services

- Follow-up services are provided for at least one year after exit from the program. Often times, the youth counselors develop a strong rapport with the youth and the youth will contact them after program completion for assistance in various aspects of their lives. However, at minimum the youth counselors will contact the youth each quarter after exit from program for a year. For example, the youth counselors keep in contact with the youth and their employer, when applicable. If the youth wants assistance in securing a better paying job or further career development the youth counselors will help them for that purpose, as well.

## 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling.

- One of the primary functions of the youth counselors is to provide counseling and guidance to youth. In some situations, the youth counselor is one of the only adults the youth has come to trust. In circumstances where the youth needs additional counseling such as drug and alcohol counseling, referrals are made to each counties substance abuse counseling organizations. If the youth appears to need personal counseling then referrals are made to mental health counselors. In Mid-Maryland there are strong supportive organizations to provide counseling services to youth. Referrals are made to the appropriate entity.

### (2) New Vision for Serving Youth

- a. Providing youth with a basic high school education is critical to responding to a demand-driven labor market. The public school systems in Mid-Maryland have consistently provided educational programming with strong outcomes. Quality alternative education programming is supported by the WIB and Title I staff through establishing connections with the students and in providing leadership experiences, and job readiness preparation opportunities. In Howard County, the Alternative Education curriculum includes tutoring and study skills training, dropout prevention strategies, such as evening and Saturday school, and mentoring. In Carroll County, alternative education is provided by the public school system in two ways, both of which are designed to either keep at risk youth in school or facilitate the return of drop-outs to the public school



system. The Flexible Student Support Program (FSSP), Carroll County Public Schools, offers three alternatives, all of which are directed toward small class or individualized instruction. The Student Support Center offers small class (usually four students) academic courses. The Distance Learning Lab offers individualized on-line academic courses in a small class setting while the Diversified Occupations Program offers academic credit for supervised work experience and instructional teaching. The second alternative education program is Gateway School. It too offers small class academic instruction and a diversified occupation program. Title I youth participating in the Carroll County Youth Program is served by both of these offerings.

b. Investments of Youth Resources:

Before the majority of youth served can successfully enter the post-high school workforce, the youth must possess the skills to become employed and stay employed. Intensive efforts to instill proper work ethic and social skills, basic math and reading skills, personal time management and related job readiness requirements are directed individually to each youth. These efforts, in many cases, include the involvement of partner and community organizations, and the business community.

The linkages between academic and occupational learning in Mid-Maryland include an abundance of resources set in place to address helping youth acquire the skills sets needed to be successful in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Mid-Maryland uses an individualized approach to address the educational, social and training needs of eligible youth. In order to accomplish this goal, local case managers involve educational and community partners providing youth services. These services and programs include but are not limited to: ABE/GED/External Diploma, ESL, career and technology, career academies, Job Corps, comprehensive counseling and career counseling, job readiness, occupational skills training, job placement in unsubsidized or subsidized summer employment, leadership development opportunities, supportive services to enhance program success, and follow-up. These efforts will be continued as they have proven to be successful, based on performance outcomes.

c. All of Mid-Maryland youth served with WIA funding must be income eligible and have a barrier to successful employment. All of those served have some barrier to successful completion of their program that includes out-of-school youth, migrant and seasonal farm worker youth, youth in foster care or aging out of foster care, youth known to the justice system, and youth of incarcerated parents, Indian and

Native American youth , and youth with disabilities. Issues of homelessness, difficulties in home relationships, child-care, self-confidence, substance abuse, and self-responsibility abound. Additionally, the vast majority of Title I youth have a diagnosed disability.

- d. The established youth programs are designed to meet the performance standards as established. The individualized employment plan must be developed in incremental steps specific to the youth's situation. Emphasis is placed on the short and long-term goals of gaining appropriate social and life skills, employability skills, earning a credential or diploma, entering employment and retaining that employment and increasing literacy/numeracy skills as necessary. The state outcomes must be related to youth needs, and employer/worker demands.

Community partnerships, including but not limited to DHR, MSDE, and DJS, Mental Health and others, encompass the leveraging of resources so vital to the provision of youth services. For example, representatives from these organizations regularly meet to receive and give referrals to those in need of services. These services include student and family advocacy, employment needs and educational/training opportunities. Referrals and contacts are made through DJS, the Howard County Sheriff's Department, HCPSS and Howard County Health Department. Also, Howard Community College's Continuing Education Department, the administrative entity for adult education and MSDE's Literacy Works programs, refer youth who are in need of supportive services that would assist the student in their attempt to obtain a high school credential.

In Carroll County, youth services providers/partners, such as Granite House (mental health), Junction, Inc. (substance abuse), DORS (persons with disabilities), The Family Center (pregnant and parenting youth counseling and services), Youth Services Bureau (youth/parent counseling), DJS, Carroll County Public Schools (from five separate administrative sources), and Title 1 participants and their families, make referrals to the BERC Title I Youth Program. Because of the strong interactive relationships that exist between youth-serving organizations in Carroll County, a team approach to address the unique and individualized needs of Title I Youth can be developed. Through frequent contact with the Title I youth and/or team members serving those youth, close monitoring of progress in reaching goals occurs, thereby enhancing the chance of positive outcomes.

It should be noted that in Carroll County, local funds have been provided to augment Title I funds to serve not only WIA eligible youth, but also some non-WIA eligible youth having similar needs. Because of the proven success of the above approach, based upon performance outcomes, it will be continued (and evaluated) in the future.

Acting as “information brokers”, the Mid-Maryland youth programs consult with community partners and other non-profit organizations to determine the most advantageous ways to address taxing issues with their youth clientele. Presentations are offered to the Howard County Health Department and to members of the Howard County Public Schools. In Carroll County, presentations are made to partner agencies, public high school students, the business community, inquiring parents, guardians, and youth and non-partner public and private entities.

These strong relationships that have been developed in Mid-Maryland allow the program to keep its own youth clientele accountable to the WIA directives. These relationships help to ease case management, especially follow up services. Additionally, youth participants who are in need of specific assessments may be directed to these organizations to receive services, aiding them in program comprehension.

Without the services and support through DHR providing subsidized health insurance and child-care assistance, most of the youth participants would not be able to attend educational classes and /or training and become employed. Many referred youth are pregnant or parenting teens. ~~The contractual relationship that BERC has with CCDSS through the Independence through Employment program and the Food Stamp Employment & Training/Able Bodied Adults with Dependent Children program enables young adult youth direct and mandatory contact with BERC's youth services.~~ Opportunities are offered to qualifying participants to enroll in substance abuse counseling or treatment, rehabilitation treatment and services, education or training, and secondary education services leading to a high school diploma or GED.

Through the strong relationships with community agencies, such as the Department of Juvenile Service and the Department of Human Resources, youth gain access to the youth workforce programs. In Howard County, youth who are out of compliance with their probationary orders are most often referred to the HC Youth Program. The program works in conjunction with probation officers,

court officials, and the sheriff's department to ensure that troubled youth obtain the comprehensive services required; e.g., connections to education, employment, community services, and volunteer opportunities. Consultation is also provided to the families of youth offenders to guide them in supporting their sons and daughters.

MSDE's Adult education and Literacy Works programs are operated through the Carroll County Public Schools Carroll Adult Learning Connection (CALC) Community College, which is co-located with the Business and Employment Resource Center; and through Howard Community College, a satellite center. Educational opportunities for obtaining a high school credential are provided for youth who have been placed out of or withdrawn from the public school system. Further, enrollment in these educational programs, in conjunction with WIA enrollment, helps to keep the students accountable and directly affects their positive educational experiences as they move in and out of critical stages of their lives. Relationships with those agencies providing non-high school diplomas will continue as an integral part of Mid-Maryland's youth programs.

- (3) The sixth youth eligibility criterion, as developed by the Mid-Maryland Youth Council, is the need for "additional assistance to complete an educational program or secure and hold employment." This is defined by the LWIB as a need for additional education, vocational training, or intensive career counseling and related assistance, in order to participate successfully in regular schoolwork or to secure and hold employment. It is further defined as follows: a lack of employability skills, including social skills; an inability to retain jobs (lost two or more jobs during the 12 months preceding eligibility determination), documented by the counselor during initial assessment; or, a lack of prior work experience (the youth has not worked for the same employer for longer than three consecutive months in the one year preceding eligibility determination), documented by the counselor during initial assessment.
- (4) The Mid-MD LWIB policy defines "other youth facing serious barriers to employment" as it relates to successful entry into the workforce and retention of employment as:
  - a. In –school- youth – Youth who are at risk of dropping out, have excessive absences from school, or have three or more suspensions will be referred from a state-accredited school.

- b. Out-of-school youth – Lack of work history, i.e., youth has not worked for the same employer for more than three months in the previous year or have lost two or more jobs in the twelve months preceding eligibility determination. Self-declaration during initial assessment will serve as documentation for lack of work history.

Providing an opportunity for services to those youth who may not otherwise be eligible is the justification for defining other youth facing serious barriers to employment. This barrier was identified in order to address the poor behaviors and attitudes on a timely basis, to prepare these youth to make a positive contribution to today's labor force.

- (5) The ratio of up to five percent of youth participants in Mid-Maryland that do not meet income criterion for eligible youth in accordance with Section 664.220 is and will continue to be monitored by the Mid-Maryland MIS manager.

- 7. Customer Flow System – Through various means of assessment, staff and partners determine the customer's level of job readiness and identify the partner resources, which are applicable to the customer's needs and goals. Partners provide core services related to the identified needs in the core assessment/triage, or a referral is made to the appropriate partner offering the indicated services. At a minimum, core services will include initial assessment, job search, and placement assistance.

Job seekers also receive core services through an informational overview session. The service is designed to acquaint the job seekers about the resources that are available through the one-stop center. However, if a job seeker received core services through some means other than the one-stop orientation overview, and that service is documented as well as the provider of the core service, it is then possible to receive the next tier of service. Job Seekers are encouraged to enroll using the MWE system. Documentation is then collected should the job seeker require and request intensive level services. After the initial assessment determining the customer's eligibility and level of job readiness, intensive services are provided through a variety of activities. At this time any need for other partner or community services is identified and the appropriate referrals are given. If intensive services are not sufficient for a customer to obtain employment he/she may be eligible to receive third tier training services.

The WIA staff determines the need for Intensive Services based on the customer's inability to achieve the employment goal. Title I staff collects documentation of eligibility. At the time of initial assessment, a pre-screening

for eligibility and identification of barriers (priority of service) and support needs is completed; a release of information is obtained allowing the customer information to be sent along with a referral as necessary.

The types of Intensive services offered are determined through a variety of activities, including but not limited to; individualized assessments and development of an individual employment plan or service strategy (IEP); counseling/career planning and case management; short-term pre-vocational services; and collaborative case management between the referring partner and WIA staff as indicated.

The One-Stop Operator determines the need for third tier Training Services based on the customer's inability to obtain the employment goal through Intensive services. The options for training type are based on the accrued data developed through the Core and Intensive service levels in conjunction with the Consumer report system, and linked to opportunities for employment and labor market demand. Follow-up services are provided for a minimum of twelve (12) months through the One-Stop system.

8. Performance Management – The Mid-Maryland LWIB adopts the State and Governor's proposed benchmarks as the local performance expectations and supports Common Measures. In order to meet the standards, Mid-Maryland will use the MWE management reports, state technical assistance, state sponsored training, WEUS Manager meeting reports, the MWE "Ad Hoc Database", quarterly performance reports sent by the State and any other reports and databases developed either locally or by the state. For one-stop management, Mid-Maryland will use The Workforce Exchange Reports available on the MWE site... The WIB will also monitor the local WIA and one-stop performance.

~~At the present time, we do not have performance standards for PY07 and PY08. However~~ The Mid-Maryland WIB supports the standards set forth by the State. The current standards we are striving to achieve are below. Mid-Maryland does not anticipate the standards to change to a level below the following:

### **Standards**

#### **Adult**

Entered Employment	90%
Employment Retention	88%
Average Earnings	\$14,477

#### **Dislocated Workers**

Entered Employment	90%
Employment Retention	90.1%
Average Earnings	\$19,446

### **Youth**

Placement in Employment Education	67%
Attainment of Degree/Certificate	52%
Literacy/Numeracy Gains	51%

### **Wagner Peyser**

Entered Employment	72%
Employment Retention	85%
Average Earnings	\$18478

9. Sunshine Provision Mid-Maryland has made efforts to involve the public in the plan's development, service strategies and offerings. The dates, times, and locations of Workforce Investment Board meetings are announced at the following website addresses: [www.mid-marylandwib.org](http://www.mid-marylandwib.org); [www.carrollbiz.net](http://www.carrollbiz.net); Local cable TV may also run the announcements. Opportunities for public review and comment on the Two-Year Plan have been advertised.

The DLLR website address <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/> is routinely made available to the public.

## **Administrative Provisions (Section IV)**

### **A. Participant Eligibility Process**

The Mid-Maryland One-Stop Centers offer universal access to Core Services. Adults and Dislocated Workers who are in need of Title I services (Intensive and Training) beyond self-directed or informational Core Services will be screened for eligibility. The LWIB Priority of Service, as detailed on page 19, is implemented according to the established fiscal benchmarks.

Adults: To be eligible for Intensive and Training services an Adult must be:

- 18 years of age or older
- A US Citizen or lawfully admitted resident alien/refugee or other individual authorized to work in the U.S.
- Males - born on or after 1/1/60 must have complied with the Selective Service Act.

Employed adults must be "low income" individuals. The term "low income individual" means an individual who received an income, or is a member of a family that received a total family income, for the 6-month period prior to registration for the program that, in relation to family size, does not exceed the higher of the poverty line, for an equivalent period; or 70% of the USDOL Lower Living Standard Income Level. Additionally, an individual receiving, or determined eligible to receive food stamps during the 6-month period prior to application; an individual who qualifies as homeless under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act; or an individual with a disability whose own income meets the definition of low income, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet the definition.

Employed adults must be "low income" individuals. The term "low income individual" means an individual who received an income, or is a member of a family that received a total family income, for the 6-month period prior to registration for the program that, in relation to family size, does not exceed 150% of the USDOL Lower Living Standard Income Level. Additionally, an individual receiving, or determined eligible to receive food stamps during the 6-month period prior to application; an individual who qualifies as homeless under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act; or an individual with a disability whose own income meets the definition of low income, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet the definition.



Documentation required to prove eligibility may include proof of age, proof of family size, and proof of income. Examples of acceptable documents are:

- Birth Certificate
- Passport
- Court Decree
- Landlord Statement
- Dept. of Social Services records
- Pay Stubs
- Public Assistance Records
- Divorce Decree
- Social Security Card

Dislocated Workers: To be an eligible Dislocated Worker, an individual must be:

- 18 years of age or older
- A US Citizen or lawfully admitted resident alien/refugee or other individual authorized to work in the U.S.
- Males - born on or after 1/1/60 must have complied with the Selective Service Act
- **AND**
- An individual who has been terminated or laid off, or who has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment; **and**
- is eligible for or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation;

**Or**

- Has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings or having performed services for an employer that were not covered under a State unemployment compensation law; **and**
- is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation; **or**
- Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of a permanent closure, or substantial layoff; **or**
- Is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that the facility will close within 180 days; **or**
- Was self-employed, but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in an area in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters; **or**

- Is a Displaced Homemaker

Required documentation will include proof of age, and proof of dislocated status. Examples of acceptable documents are:

- Birth Certificate
- Passport
- Baptismal Certificate
- Letter of dislocation notification from employer
- Unemployment Compensation records

Youth: An eligible youth is defined as an individual who is:

- Ages 14 through 21
  - A low income individual (as defined in the adult eligibility section above)
- AND**
- Within one or more of the following categories:
  - Deficient in basic literacy skills (computes, reads, writes or speaks
  - English at or below grade level 8>9;
  - Is unable to compute, read, write or speak English at a level required to function on the job, in the family or in society)
  - School dropout
  - Homeless, runaway, or foster child
  - Pregnant or parenting
  - Offender
  - An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment (as defined in Section 6b(3) of this plan)

Up to 5% of youth participants may be individuals who are not “low income”, but must be within one or more of the following categories:

- School dropout
- Basic skills deficient (as defined above)
- One or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the individual’s age
- Pregnant or parenting
- Possess one or more disabilities, including learning disabilities
- Homeless or runaway
- Offender

- Faces serious barriers to employment (as defined in Section 6b(3) of this plan

Required documentation will include:

- Proof of age,
- Proof of family size,
- Proof of family income,
- Proof of existent barriers.

Examples of acceptable documents are:

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate
- School records
- Court Decree
- Dept. of Social Services records
- Pay stubs
- Public Assistance Records
- Existence of barriers-public assistance records, school records, DORS,
- Dept. of Juvenile Justice records, etc.

## B. OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING

1. ~~In accordance with the Act and WIA regulations, the One-Stop Operator and/or Administrative entity will monitor sub-recipient contracts, service contract agreements, or other contracts. Monitoring will measure the performance based on the Scope of Service submitted in the accepted proposal, and act to determine contract compliance, as well as deficiencies of the program. Title I staff conducts program and fiscal monitoring at least once annually. BERC and E&T, as county government departments, adhere to each respective county's contract development and renewal procedures.~~ The Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area does not have any Sub recipient Agreements in place with its suppliers or service providers. All relationships with suppliers and service providers are of a **vendor – customer's** basis whereas vendors are paid upon delivery or completion of services provided.
  - a. The Mid-Maryland One-Stop Operator or Administrative Entity monitors sub-recipient agreements and contracts on an annual basis. Sub-recipients and contracts, with terms exceeding twelve (12) months, are monitored on-site, at least on an annual basis, or more frequently if routine desk monitoring indicates a need.

Sub-recipients of less than 12 months are monitored at least once during the contract period.

2. Fiscal personnel review sub-recipient and contractor records and invoices to ensure that expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations as specified in the contracts. This information is tracked against enrollment records at the time of invoice.
3. The on-site monitoring visit will also ensure compliance with other provisions of the Act and the regulations and other applicable laws and regulations through interviews with sub-recipient staff, and review of sub-recipient records.
4. Written recordings of the findings for each monitoring visit are forwarded to the sub-recipient for response and become part of the Mid-Maryland's file. Corrective action and the required time frames for completion are documented accordingly.
5. Technical assistance is offered at the conclusion of the review to ensure that any corrective actions can be implemented prior to the closure of the monitoring review process.
6. The LWIB, in conjunction with the local administrative structures, provides oversight and strategic planning of the One-Stop system activities. The LWIB voted to elevate the Youth Council's authority to oversee the youth activities on behalf of the Board.

### **C. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES/COMPLAINT PROCESSING PROCEDURES**

Reference 181(C) of the Workforce Investment Act; Section 667.600, Subpart F of the Regulations; and 29 CFR 37.4, to provide for resolution of complaints arising as a result of alleged violations in the operation of programs funded under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act. Policy Statement is attached (Attachment II)

1. Any person who believes that either he or she, or any specific class of individuals, has been or is being subjected to discrimination prohibited under the Workforce Investment Act has the option to file a written complaint with either the Mid-Maryland WIA EO Officer or the Director of the Civil Rights Center (CRC).
2. Grievance/complaint procedures are posted in the Howard and Carroll County Title I One-Stop locations, are available to all customers using the Centers and are given to customers meeting with Title I staff. They are provided to subcontractors or sub recipients during the contract development process. Other interested parties, such as One-Stop partners, may have access to the procedures upon request. Documentation of customer receipt of the procedures will be maintained by the Title I entities.

### 3. Categories of Complaints

- a. Grievances/complaints alleging illegal forms of discrimination based on any of the following: race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief; and against any beneficiary of programs financially assisted under Title I of the WIA, on the basis of the beneficiary's citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or his/her participation in any WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity.
- b. Grievances/complaints that do not allege illegal forms of discrimination, such as labor standards violations.

### 4. Recipient Discrimination Complaint Processing Procedures

- a. Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.
- b. Each complaint must be filed in writing and contain the following information:
  - Complainant's name and address, or alternate means of contact
  - Identity of the individual or entity that the complainant alleges is responsible for the discrimination
  - Description of the complainant's allegations, including enough detail to determine if the CRC or Recipient has jurisdiction over the complaint, the complaint was filed in time and that the complaint has apparent merit
  - Complainant's signature or the signature of the complainant's authorized representative
- c. Complaints may be filed by completing and submitting CRC's Complaint Information and Privacy Act Consent Form
- d. Both the complainant and the respondent have the right to be represented by an attorney or other representative.
- e. If a complaint filed with the Mid-Maryland WIA EO Officer is determined not to be under the local area's jurisdiction, the EO Officer will immediately notify the complainant, in writing, providing a statement of the reason for that determination, notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with CRC within 30 days of the date on which the complainant receives the notice.

### 5. Methods of Resolution/Disposition of Complaints

- a. On receipt of a written complaint, the Mid-Maryland EO Officer will provide to the complainant:
  - An acknowledgement that the complaint was received.

- A statement that the complainant has the right to be represented in the complaint process.
  - A list of issues raised in the complaint, a statement of whether the Officer will accept the issue/s for investigation or rejects the issue/s, and the reasons for each rejection.
- b. The Mid-Maryland EO Officer will provide a period for fact-finding and Investigation of the circumstances of the complaint; and a period during which the EO Officer will attempt to resolve the complaint, including alternative dispute resolution.
- c. The complainant has the choice of using alternative dispute resolution (ADR) or the customary process.
- d. In the event any agreement reached under ADR is breached, any party to the agreement may file a complaint with the Director of CRC. If a complaint is filed with the Director, the following rules apply:
- The complaint must be filed within 30 days of the date on which the complainant learned of the alleged breach.
  - The Director will evaluate the circumstances to determine whether the agreement was breached.
  - If the agreement was breached, the complainant may file a complaint with CRC based on the original allegation(s).
- e. If an agreement is not reached under ADR, the complainant may file a complaint with the Director, CRC, following the filing guidelines.
6. Notice of Final Action
- a. The Mid-Maryland EO Officer will issue a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the date on which the complaint is filed, containing the following information:
- The decision on the issue and an explanation of the reasons underlying the decision, or
  - A description of the way the parties to the complaint resolved the issue, and
  - Notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with CRC within 30 days of the date on which the Notice of Final Action is issued if the complainant is dissatisfied with the final action.
- b. If the Mid-Maryland EO Officer fails to issue a Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the date the complaint was received, the complainant may file a

complaint with the Director of CRC within 30 days of the expiration of the 90-day period.

- c. Generally, a complaint must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination. However, for good cause shown, the Director may extend the filing time. The time period for filing is for the administrative convenience of CRC, and does not create a defense for the respondent.

## 7. Record keeping

- a. The Mid-Maryland EO Officer will maintain a log of discrimination complaints filed, including:
  - name and address of complainant
  - ground and description of complaint
  - date complaint was filed
  - disposition and date of disposition of the complaint
  - any other pertinent information
- b. Information that could identify a complainant will be kept confidential.
- c. The Mid-Maryland EO Officer will maintain records regarding complaints and actions for not less than three years from the date of resolution of the complaint.

## 8. Resolution of complaints alleging nondiscrimination issues

- a. The complainant is encouraged to seek resolution by addressing the concern with the individual seen as being responsible or that individual's supervisor. If this does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant may submit the complaint to the Mid-Maryland Director or EO Officer.
- b. The complaint must be submitted in writing within 30 days of the alleged incident and include:
  - Complainant's name and address, or alternate means of contact.
  - Description of the complainant's allegations, including enough detail to determine if the complaint was filed on time and that the complaint has apparent merit.
- c. The Mid-Maryland Director or EO Officer will issue a written response within 30 days of the date on which the complaint was received.
- d. The response will include the decision on the issue and an explanation of the reasons underlying the decision.

- e. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, the complainant has the right to appeal to the next level of authority within the respective county structure.
- f. Remedies for violation of any requirement may include:
  - Suspension or termination of payments to a program participant or vendor under Title I.
  - Suspension or termination of payments to or contract with an employer.
  - Efforts toward reinstatement of an employee when applicable.
  - Other equitable alternatives.

#### **D. NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVISIONS**

1. Reasonable Accommodation – Mid-Maryland will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities with regard to aid, benefits, services, training, and employment, unless providing the accommodation would cause undue hardship.
2. Communication – Individuals with Disabilities – In Mid-Maryland, both Carroll and Howard Counties are in compliance with the ADA for all programs, facilities, services and activities. The Division of Rehabilitative Services, county government entities that provide accommodations and other community-based organizations are used to ensure that communication with qualified individuals with disabilities, including individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, are as effective as communications with the hearing population. The Disability Navigator plays a key role in service coordination for job seekers with disabilities. *Mid-Maryland has received a Disability Accommodation grant*, thus increasing communication capability for job seekers with disabilities.
3. Notice and Communication – Title I staff coordinates with other partners and county resources such as community colleges, New Windsor Refugee Center, four-year liberal arts schools, the Foreign-Born Information and Referral Network, and MAPS (Maryland Access Point of Service) of Howard County, all of which have the capacity to meet the language needs of limited-English speaking individuals.
4. WIA Compliance- With regard to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity in WIA Title I financially assisted programs, the Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area will comply with WIA Sec. 188 and 29 CFR Part 37.

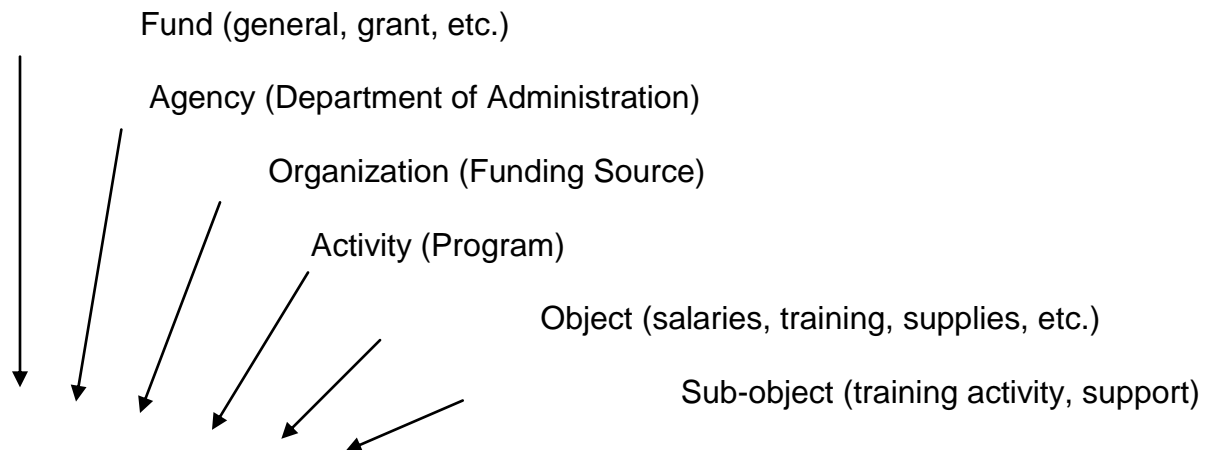
#### **E. PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING PROCEDURES**



1. Procurement procedures for Howard and Carroll Counties, which comprise the Mid-Maryland WIA, are attached. (Attachment III) These procedures conform to the standards in DOL regulations 29 CFR Part 97 and Part 95 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements). Part 97 refers to States and Local Governments and Part 95 refers to Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-Profit Organizations. .
2. This is to assure that the acquisition, management, and disposition of property adhere to the Property Management Procedures taken from DOL regulations 29 CFR Part 97 and 29 CFR Part 95.
3. All Mid-Maryland WIB members sign a Conflict of Interest Policy to assure avoidance of conflict of interest in their responsibilities, particularly those related to the awarding of contracts. (Attachment IV)

## F. FISCAL CONTROLS

1. Financial Management - All financial transactions will be conducted and records will be maintained in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
  - a. The existing Howard County Government fiscal management system utilized by the E&T **OWD** allows for the tracking of obligations, expenditures and assets; and submitting of required reports to DLLR in both a timely and accurate manner. Carroll County maintains similar systems for reporting and tracking fiscal information. The Howard County fiscal system is described below.
    - i. The County Advantage Financial System (AFIN) provides the vehicle for tracking and reconciling grant expenditures and revenue. Each grant fund is assigned a unique coding that categorizes expenditures and revenues by specific grant.



XXX XXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XX

ii. Obligational Control Systems

- 1) Through a combination of specially designed Excel worksheets and the Howard County AFIN system, control of obligations and expenditures is maintained. The County financial system (AFIN) records the amount of funds available for each grant, the amount of encumbrances, expenditures, and the current balance. Contracts for sub-recipients are subject to extensive review for funds availability and legal sufficiency. Once the contracts are drafted, they are forwarded to the E & T OWD Fiscal Manager at which time E & T OWD funds availability is reviewed. Contracts then proceed through the Department of Administration for review, the County's Finance Office for fund availability review, the County Office of Law, the County Administrator, and ultimately the County Executive for signature.
- 2) The fiscal manager follows the county's standard procedures and review for fund availability against obligations initiated for routine supply purchases.
- 3) Individual Training Account (ITA) Vouchers and Customer Support Obligations follow an in-house ITA Voucher process which identifies the client to be served, funding source, the training activity, the service provider, component, start and estimated end dates, and other pertinent information.
  - a) These vouchers are completed by the Employment Consultants, and forwarded to the Fiscal Manager for accuracy review, funding source availability and posting the obligations. The Fiscal Manager maintains adequate records to monitor both obligations and expenditures by funding source. This information is reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure adequate control over both obligations and expenditures.

- b) Once approved, the client takes the fully executed voucher to the authorized vendor to register for the class. Those approved vendors, invoice ~~E & T~~ **OWD**, attaching a copy of the voucher or referencing the voucher number to ensure that payment is made only for authorized training.
  - (1) Vendors to whom clients are referred must have successfully completed a non-financial agreement in place with the WIA offices and be identified on the statewide list of training providers, where appropriate.

iii. Expenditure Control

- 1) Internal controls are in place for ensuring that all expenditures are for allowable purposes and that expenditures are charged to the proper cost category.
- 2) Upon submission of an invoice by a vendor or service provider for payment, the Fiscal Manager reviews the invoice for accuracy and compares it against the contract to ensure compliance.
  - (1) Invoices must be accompanied by back-up documentation that must be retained in the WIA office for a minimum of 5 years.
- 3) Following approval of the invoice, it is compared with the obligation log and corresponding grant account.
- 4) Utilizing the County's electronic purchasing and payment processing system, the Fiscal Manager prepares a payment request to process and post the transaction to the appropriate grant expenditure fund.
- 5) The payment request is electronically forwarded to the Director for review and approval. When approved, the Director releases the transaction, which is automatically routed to the appropriate approval levels in the Purchasing, Budget and Finance Departments depending on the amount and type of transaction.

- 6) Once the above controls are met, the transaction is approved for payment and submitted for processing.
- 7) Payments are processed weekly by the Accounts Payable Section of the Finance Department in the form of electronic funds transfers or by check.
- 8) Copies of the payment documents are maintained in the ~~OWD~~ administrative office and compared against the monthly transaction listing reports generated by the Finance Office.
  - (1) Any discrepancies are reconciled by the ~~E & T~~ **OWD** Fiscal Manager.
- 9) Carroll County follows similar procedures and forwards invoices for their expenditures to ~~E & T~~ **OWD** on a monthly basis for reimbursement.

iv. Staff Payroll System

- 1) ~~E & T~~ **OWD** staff sign and submit time and attendance sheets on a bi-weekly basis that include attendance information for each day of the week to the Department's timekeeper.
- 2) Department's timekeeper reviews the time sheets against the "Leave of Absence" slips that were previously approved by management, and submits a report to the County's Payroll Department after obtaining the appropriate supervisory personnel's signature.
- 3) Payroll Department enters the data submitted by all departments into the County Payroll system which when balanced is uploaded to ADP for processing.
- 4) ADP generates the bi-weekly paychecks which are distributed by the Payroll Department
- 5) Carroll County follows the same procedures except they process payroll internally through the county's financial management system.

v. Fixed Assets Tracking

Assets are purchased through the counties purchasing departments following the policies and procedures established by the counties. Upon the receipt of the pertinent information, the Finance Office will enter the data into the fixed asset system for tracking and reporting purposes. Each county is responsible for taking an annual inventory of the assets that they are assigned.

b. Not Applicable

c. Fiscal Reporting System

1. The Howard County ~~E & T~~ OWD accounting system utilizes a Microsoft Excel based format for tracking and compiling all financial information of the Mid-Maryland WIA offices. The information will be used to generate Requisitions for Cash, Quarterly Status Reports, Final Closeout Reports, and any other ad hoc reports as needed by the Director and the WIB.
2. On a monthly basis, the Howard County Department of Finance's Detail Listing of Obligations vs. Budget (A-103) and the Trial Balance By Accounting Distribution (A-611) shall be reconciled with ~~E & T's~~ OWD's accounting system. After all transactions have been accounted for and any corrections made (through journal entries) the accounting system has been verified to begin report preparation.

2. Key staff working with WIA funds:

Christine Cruz  
John Pettebone

BERC, Fiscal Manager  
Howard County Fiscal Manager

3. See 1.iii - Accounts Payable System

4. Description of different systems:

- a. Fiscal Reporting System - See the above explanation.
- b. Obligation Control System - See the above explanation.
- c. ITA Payment System – See the above explanation regarding Accounts Payable System. If a customer is Pell Eligible they will be required to

submit documentation showing the amount of the award. This information will be provided to the Fiscal Manager for tracking.

- d. Chart of account system – See the above explanation.
  - e. Accounts Payable System – See the above explanation.
  - f. Staff Payroll System – See the above explanation.
  - g. N/A
  - h. Participant stipend payment system – See section 6.a. (2)
5. See F.1.
6. Cash Management System–
- a. HoCo ~~E & T~~ OWD prepares and submits cash requisitions to DLLR on a regular basis.
  - b. Requisitions will be based on reimbursement for accrued expenditures already incurred and anticipated expenditures within the next 1-2 months.
    - 1) Expenditures are based on direct costs and the cost allocation of cost pools.
    - 2) Revenues are tracked per each grant and by program year using an Excel worksheet.
  - c. Upon receipt of revenues (reimbursed expenditures) from DLLR, the fiscal manager reconciles funds received to the requisitions submitted. Funds received are presented in a timely manner to the Howard County Cashier's Office to be deposited in the appropriate bank account.
  - d. WIA cash will not be kept on hand.
7. Cost Allocation Procedures -
- a) The Mid-Maryland WIA offices assure that they use cost allocation methods that are both reasonable and consistently applied for the entire program year. These offices will also maintain adequate documentation to support the distribution of costs to the various funding sources and cost categories.

- b) Howard County ~~E & T~~ OWD will charge costs that benefit a single funding source and /or cost category directly. All indirect and unassigned costs will be identified and accumulated in the cost pools, Administrative Cost Pool (ACP) and a Program Cost Pool (PCP), and distributed based on acceptable cost allocation methodologies.
  - i. The ACP cost center accumulates administrative expenses (e.g. Administrator and Fiscal Manager's wages and fringes, supplies, telephone, etc.), which will be distributed to the WIA administration cost category.
  - ii. Program Cost Pool
    - 1) The PCP cost center accumulates indirect training costs (e.g. program consultants' wages and fringes, mileage, supplies, etc.) and allocates these expenses via time distribution to the Adult Program, the Youth Program, and the Dislocated Workers Program.
    - 2) Employment Consultants bill their time according to the amount of time spent on clients in each of the WIA funding sources. The staff time distribution reports are completed on a biweekly basis and are signed by each individual as well as the appropriate supervisory personnel.
    - 3) County funds may be included in the both cost pools.
- c) The BERC/~~E&T~~ OWD offices use staff time distribution reports in allocating direct costs to the various funding sources. All the indirect costs, such as telephones and supplies, are distributed based on percentage of enrolled participants.
- d) Cost Allocation Plans for One-Stop Centers

WIA Title I staff is located at the Columbia Workforce Center One-Stop offices and the Business and Employment Resource Center. Co-locating staff provides for coordinated and consolidated services to customers. Basic parameters for the cost allocation plan have been developed.

## 8. Audits

All governmental and non-profit organizations must follow the audit requirements of OMB Circular A-133. An annual financial and compliance audit will be conducted and submitted to the Department of Labor, Licensing,

and Regulation, Division of Workforce Development within thirty (30) days after the completion of the audit report, but no later than nine (9) months after the end of the audit period. Furthermore, the LWIB or fiscal agent insures that all required sub-recipient audits and all sub-recipient audit resolution procedures are completed.

9. Debt Collection

- a. Mid-Maryland WIA offices assume responsibility for the collection of established debt if WIA funds have been misspent or there is a determination of disallowed costs.
- b. If the contract is still in force, payments to the provider will be reduced according to the debt. If the contract has expired, efforts for collection will be made. If there is no closure, the WIA offices will forward the situation to the respective offices of law for collection proceedings.

**G. LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD (LWIB) – CHIEF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL (CLEO) WORKING AGREEMENTS**

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) establishes numerous functions and responsibilities for Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs). Many of these functions and responsibilities must be made in coordination with, or with the approval of, the Chief Local Elected Official(s) (CLEO's).

I. Purpose

The purpose of this agreement provides for a delineation of each partner's roles and responsibilities in relation to workforce development activities of the Mid-Maryland workforce investment system.

II. Appointments to the Workforce Board (WIB)

Appointments are made by the CLEO's from recommendations or nominations from the respective organization of the nominee. For example, representatives of business in the local area are appointed from among individuals nominated by local business organizations.

The County Executive in Howard County appoints representation from Howard County. The Board of County Commissioners of Carroll County appoints representation from Carroll County.

III. Areas of joint LWIB/CLEO responsibilities



1. Any action relating to the joint responsibilities of the County CLEO's and the WIB will be taken only with the concurrence of all the parties involved. The Counties or the WIB without the concurrence of the other bodies may unilaterally take no joint responsibility.
2. The local Title I staff in both Counties, acting as representatives of the LEO's, worked directly with the WIB in establishing the policies and procedures and in the development of the Plans.
3. The One Stop Operator was selected by an agreement between the LWIB and a consortium of more than three partner organizations and with consent of County executive level representatives of the CLEO's.
4. The Youth Council recommends eligible providers of Youth activities to the WIB. Title I staff use the local procurement system in each county to incorporate the WIB's recommendation for inclusion of service providers in a competitive process, if necessary.
5. The identification of eligible training providers can be recommended by the WIB for processing under the established procedures for inclusion on the local training provider list. The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) training provider list is also used as a source for training. Title I staff use the local procurement system in each county to incorporate the WIB's recommendation.
6. Intensive services will primarily be provided through the partnership of state staff, WIA Title I staff, and the Community Colleges. Contracts will be developed through the respective county procurement procedures for the provision of Intensive Services, as necessary.
7. The LWIB does not have its own operating budget. Day-to-day operational duties are performed by the Title I staff under the Board's direction and in conjunction with County supervision. Title I staff provide administrative support to the WIB. The budgets, which support staff activity, are developed within the Title I County structure and are controlled by the local government system.
8. The Workforce Board in conjunction with the Youth Council and with the concurrence of the local elected officials provides oversight for local youth activities. Title I staff who interface directly with the Youth Council and WIB, provide direct services to youth as well as the range of employment and training activities to adults and dislocated workers. Title I staff are an integral part of the One-Stop system. The Operator (Business & Employment Resource Center) and ~~Employment & Training~~ Howard County Office of Workforce Development are

responsible for One-Stop partner oversight and monitoring the provision of services among the partners.

9. Mid-Maryland LWIB has adopted the State and Governor's negotiated benchmarks as the local performance expectations based upon the historical performance of the Title I staff.
10. The membership of the Youth Council, as a subgroup of the WIB, has been developed according to Regulation 661.335.
11. The scope of the relationship between the local WIB and the County Executive in Howard and the Commissioners in Carroll has been addressed in "Local Area Governance" of the general narrative section of the Plan. In summary the local Workforce Board works through Title I staff who are County personnel and who report to respective county authorities. Additionally, any WIB member may request a direct appointment with the CLEOs.

#### IV. General Liability Issues:

1. Howard County serves as the local grant recipient for, and shall be liable for any misuse of the grant funds allocated to the local area under sections 128 and 133 of the Act.
2. The Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area consists of Carroll and Howard counties. Each local unit of government assumes the responsibility for liability of Title I personnel and Title I operations within their respective jurisdictions.

#### V. Administrative Issues

1. Howard County government has designated **Employment & Training the Office of Workforce Development**, a county unit under the Department of Administration, to serve as the local grant sub-recipient for WIA funds. This designation does not relieve Howard County government of the liability for any misuse of grant funds.
2. Funds are disbursed by action of the sub-recipient and Administrative entity, Howard County Employment and Training, through appropriate departments of Howard County government, the local grant recipient for workforce investment activities of the Mid-Maryland area. Carroll County encumbers half of the state's formula allocation to the Mid-Maryland Workforce Area. Carroll County submits invoices for workforce activities to Howard County for reimbursement. However,

there is flexibility for using either county's portion, with approval of the chief local elected officials, to meet the Title I workforce activity needs in either county.

3. The LWIB developed and adopted by-laws reflective of its authority under the WIA and in conjunction with the structure of the local county governments.
4. Meetings of the WIB shall be held at regularly scheduled times and as needed in accordance with the by-laws. Meetings are advertised in advance and are open to the public.
5. Any dispute resulting from non-concurrence between the CLEO's and the WIB shall be resolved as expeditiously as possible so that either a concurrence is reached or the CLEO's and WIB shall appoint an ad hoc committee from their respective memberships to confer and resolve issues.

## **H. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ONE STOP SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM**

The Mid-Maryland WIB worked through the Strategic Planning Committee, the Youth Council, state and local governments, and partners to meet its responsibilities related to one-stop operations.

1. The Board voted to use the option selecting one-stop operators as described in Section 121(d) of the Act allowing for an agreement between three or more one-stop partners and the local board, and in agreement with the chief local elected officials.
2. The Committees define the role, in accordance with WIFI 7-99, of the One-stop operator and submit recommendations to the full board. Priority responsibilities of the Operator target accountability, flexibility and effectiveness of service delivery, and precipitating change within the economic development arena as it relates to workforce development. The One-Stop Operator will ensure that staff and partner agencies receive instruction and updates regarding changes to the One-Stop operations and will consistently strive to improve service to its customer base.
3. The local board elected to designate the former CareerNet sites as Mid-Maryland One-Stop Centers.
4. At a minimum workforce centers are expected to meet performance standards set by the State. Customers are greeted immediately at the reception desk, upon entering the One-stop. After signing in manually, the customers are triaged by reception personnel to the appropriate area/staff that can provide the best assistance. Customers are given the opportunity to participate in the one-stop orientation overview. The Resource area is always manned with at least one individual that can provide assistance or direction to the customer. Every staff member is capable of working the reception area and the Resource areas, and can provide Core services to customers. Staff members can also respond to inquiries from local businesses pertaining to services offered. There are dedicated personnel to work with the business community that can provide specific targeted business services, but all staff is competent to respond to basic inquiries. The Centers provide universal access to any individual wishing to use the resources and receive core services. All staff is familiar with the services that partner organizations provide and the myriad of other resources available in the community. Staff can make either formal or informal referrals to the agencies based on the customer needs.

The YC will be following youth placed in employment or education; attainment of a certificate or degree; and whether any literacy or numeric gains were met. The Board adopted the Common Measures standards as a minimum requirement for each Center.

- The one-stop workforce centers are to be operated and managed in a professional customer friendly manner keeping in mind standard safety, neatness, and cleanliness measures. All personnel are expected to follow the personnel rules and regulations stipulated by their respective employers working with partners to enhance the service experience of the customers.
5. The Mid-Maryland LWIB uses the State and Governor's negotiated benchmarks as the local performance expectations. Beyond the formal performance standards established in conjunction with the state, which the board may want to tweak, the board expects timely, professional, and courteous service to the universal population accessing the workforce centers. Customer feedback is requested in survey form and informally, and timely response is provided to any required follow-up. All personnel are evaluated through their respective employer systems, for skill sets and practice inclusive of job knowledge and "soft skill" competencies. Reception area personnel receive on-going training in the expectations of working with the public and are particularly conscious of anyone waiting in the reception area. Feedback is received informally on-site by customers reporting problems in "real time" specifically with computer equipment. Satisfaction surveys are routinely requested at all Overview or job specific workshops. An internal mechanism is used to follow-up on job orders. Close follow-up with registered customers frequently results in the use of supplemental data. Mid-Maryland uses available reports to achieve more timely information on outcomes.
  6. In reviewing and evaluating performance of the one-stop system and operators, the Board utilizes direct customer feedback, State Performance reports, such as the WP 9002, WIA reports, and use Exchange reports, in addition to internal management reports. Essentially the Board is interested in whether customers received jobs, whether they retained the job, and whether the job was an improvement over their former one. Board members also visit the workforce centers to observe and informally ask customers about their experience. The WIB is interested in the types and costs of training.

The level of customer satisfaction within the centers is examined from the time an individual enters the One-Stop. This is accomplished through customer satisfaction surveys and informal feedback. One-stop customers are requested to complete customer satisfaction surveys for participants using the Resource Centers, attending One-stop Overview sessions, EI workshops, other job acquisition enhancement workshops and businesses using Center resources. The surveys are reviewed and if there is an area that needs improvement, a strategy is implemented to improve that service. The staff and administration at the One-Stop Centers value their reputation for providing quality customer service. To that end, the One-stops work on continual improvement for customers' satisfaction.

7. Board members with proven negotiation and/or business skills, will assist the “MOU Team”, comprised of the WIA Director, center managers, and the labor exchange administrator, in meeting with partners to negotiate terms and conditions in accordance with cost allocation regulations for the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU’s) related to operation of the One-Stop delivery system in Mid-Maryland.

## **I. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/CONSUMER REPORT**

Consumers have access to The Maryland Workforce Exchange System to assist them in making quality choices with regard to a service provider. The system includes: performance of training providers in the local area; overall performance for specific customer groups, performance of specific provider sites; current information on employment and wage trends and projections; and duration of training programs. Currently customers can access more complete data using the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) site. However, staff has access to performance data for the providers and is able to share that information with participants.

In order to ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers, the LWIB will:

- Use internal mechanisms for follow-up on referrals;
- Address customer complaints;
- Identify areas of concern that need to be remedied;
- Encourage closer informal feedback from customers to enhance the monitoring process; Demand prompt and quality service for customers;
- Promote a safe and professional environment;
- Provide quality-teaching tools to achieve desired outcomes.

Many of the eligible providers of services used in Mid-Maryland also have contacts in the business community and obtain the majority of their income from the business community. The community colleges and 4-year schools also have departments dedicated to working with business and also have contacts in the local area. This allows the providers to track what skills are currently being required in a given industry. In addition to the employer contacts, many providers may be connected to industry leaders. In industries that are germane to Maryland’s special business grants (Maryland Business Works, ~~Teach for the Health of It~~) there is a relationship between the service provider and the business. Having the LWIA involved in ~~both~~ of these grants permits us access to staying abreast of industry trends and developing a rapport with local businesses through personal interaction. Through communication with the businesses we are able to obtain feedback on the quality of the training, the providers themselves as well as industry trends. The training providers are eager to work with us, therefore, are

very forthcoming in providing information relevant to the latest local industry trends.

The majority of referrals for a particular training/or training provider are obtained through one of the following methods: Either the provider or a customer requests the provider solicit the LWIA for nomination to the Maryland State List of Occupational Training Providers or a customer requests a particular type of training because they can prove there is a demand for it; or the provider is offering a unique program and enrolling no more than 2 WIA students per program, per year in accordance with WIFI 5-00. In the former case, the provider is given the appropriate forms to complete and send to MHEC. If MHEC approves the training after the provider submits the appropriate documentation then the provider will usually contact the LWIA for nomination to the state list. A representative from Mid-Maryland will review and research the training program. If there is no clear justification to omit the program from the list then we approve the nomination. The LWIA will send the provider a local Non-Financial Agreement to complete if there appears to be a local demand for the training. Often times when there is a request from a participant for approval for a specific training it is because a perspective employer will hire the candidate based on the need for that training or it is for a very specific type of training in a particular industry. This again allows the LWIA to become more familiar with what trends may be up and coming in the business community that may not be reflected in current LMI data and provide another level of service to our customers.

Staff in Mid-Maryland develops a strong rapport with their participant customers once they are at the Intensive or Training level of service and before “hard” dollars are spent on their training. Feedback is encouraged throughout the process as to the quality of training and service. Often times, customers are not comfortable putting their complaints in writing against a training provider but will communicate their concerns to staff. When this occurs, staff will research the issue, contact the provider and address the issue with the provider. If multiple complaints are brought against a provider, even in an informal manner, the staff may request an on-site monitoring visit and if necessary cease to use that provider.

Again, many of our business customers use our specialty grants to provide training for their employees. In these grants the employer selects the training provider and may be required to pay a portion of the cost of the training. This allows the employer to select training to meet the particular needs of their business as well as giving them buy-in to the process and the training. This commitment on the part of the employers encourages their dedication to the quality of the training. In both the formal evaluations at the end of the training required by the grant and through informal mechanisms, employer feedback is solicited and action is taken with the training provider to either change/enhance the service or if the feedback is positive that is also passed on to the provider, and as opportunity allows shared with other businesses.

In accordance with WIA regulations, customer choice is paramount in the selection of eligible providers at both the Intensive and Training levels of service. If there is not a class available within a reasonable time frame from one provider the staff in partnership with the participant or business customer will continue to research availability of courses. Every attempt is made to find one that is held within a satisfactory timeframe.

The Mid-Maryland area updates its Non-Financial agreements/Pre-Awards Certification with training providers every two years. This gives the providers an opportunity to update their information with the LWIA and for the LWIA to identify changes to the providers system. If a provider is on the MHEC list or is a college or university then they are required to complete the NFA only. If a provider has been exempted from the MHEC list they may be required to complete a full-scale pre-awards certification bi-annually in addition to the NFA. The only exceptions to this are the 2 exceptions listed in WIFI 5-00 or if a training provider is specifically selected by a business. This allows the business the flexibility of choice and alleviates feelings of “bureaucracy” in dealing with a government agency.

The MWE system along with the CareerOneStop website are two methods customers use to research and obtain data on eligible providers and the local labor market. These Internet based systems allow the customers to make informed decisions regarding the local market. However, another large factor in the consumer report system is the relationship the customer has with the staff at the One Stop centers. Often times the staff has insight into what is going on in the community, which is information that cannot be found in a database. Staff has networking contacts that enhance the knowledge they can share with the customers. Additionally, staff often has knowledge of the local labor market that the business community does not know how to access on their own. The sharing of this knowledge and information strengthens the relationship with the business community and adds another level of customer service that can be provided.

The staff in Mid-Maryland strives to continuously update/upgrade their knowledge. As funding permits, staff will attend formal training sessions or conferences to achieve continuous improvement and consistently improve service to customers. Staff also engages in independent learning opportunities in order to enhance their knowledge and skill sets.

The Mid-Maryland LWIA plans to continue to strive for continuous improvements in services provided to all of their customers. We plan to continue to develop and enhance relationships with the local business community, job seeker participants and training providers as well as use the tools and resources available to us to improve customer satisfaction service.



## Date Completed

~~May 17, 2007~~

May 19, 2009